

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A portable intra-oral capture and display system for use by a dental practitioner in connection with a patient seated in a dental chair, said system comprising:

a handpiece elongated for insertion into an oral cavity of the patient, said handpiece including a light emitter on a distal end thereof for illuminating an object in the cavity and an image sensor for capturing an image of the object and generating an image signal therefrom;

a monitor interconnected with the handpiece, said monitor containing electronics for processing the image for display, and a display element for displaying the image, where the interconnection between the monitor and the handpiece includes an electrical connection for communicating the image signal from the image sensor in the camera to the electronics in the monitor; and

a receptacle on the dental chair for receiving the monitor, wherein the receptacle conforms to the monitor such that the monitor may be withdrawn from the receptacle in order to allow the display element to be seen by the dental practitioner or the patient.

2. The system as claimed in claim 1 wherein the dental chair includes an armrest and the receptacle is mounted underneath the armrest such that the monitor may be withdrawn from the receptacle from under the armrest for easy viewing by the patient or dental practitioner.

3. The system as claimed in claim 1 wherein the monitor is hinged to the receptacle such that the monitor may be withdrawn from the receptacle and tilted upwards for easy viewing by the patient or dental practitioner.

4. The system as claimed in claim 1 wherein the interconnection between the monitor and the handpiece is a wireless connection

and the monitor may be completely withdrawn from the receptacle in order to allow the monitor to be handheld by the dental practitioner or the patient.

5. The system as claimed in claim 1 further including a contamination control device for the portable monitor comprising a pouch enclosing the monitor and having a transparent front panel that is positioned adjacent the display element.

6. The system as claimed in claim 1 wherein the portable monitor includes a screen for displaying touch screen controls together with the image, and a touch screen interface for providing a plurality of touch screen controls that appear on the screen of the display monitor.

7. A portable display system integrated into a dental chair for use by a dental practitioner in connection with a patient seated in a dental chair, said system comprising:

a monitor containing electronics for processing an image for display and a display element for displaying the image; and

a receptacle on the dental chair for receiving the monitor, wherein the receptacle conforms to the monitor such that the monitor may be withdrawn from the receptacle in order to allow the display element to be seen by the dental practitioner or the patient.

8. The system as claimed in claim 7 wherein the dental chair includes an armrest and the receptacle is mounted underneath the armrest such that the monitor may be withdrawn from the receptacle from under the armrest for easy viewing by the patient or dental practitioner.

9. The system as claimed in claim 7 wherein the monitor is hinged to the receptacle such that the monitor may be withdrawn from the receptacle and tilted upwards for easy viewing by the patient or dental practitioner.

10. The system as claimed in claim 7 further including a contamination control device for the portable monitor comprising a pouch enclosing the monitor and having a transparent front panel that is positioned adjacent the display element.

11. The system as claimed in claim 7 wherein the portable monitor includes a screen for displaying touch screen controls together with the image, and a touch screen interface for providing a plurality of touch screen controls that appear on the screen of the display monitor.